



# Thirsty. Hot and dry. That sums up the water situation for this summer and fall months ahead.

Despite near normal rainfall in the Lakewood area, elsewhere in California the story was bleak:

- Some upper dams in the San Gabriel watershed are already empty. Lower dams are less than one-third full. Runoff from the watershed helps replenish the aquifers from which Lakewood draws its own water.

- State water officials say this is shaping up to be the 10th-driest three-year period on record.

- Court rulings protecting the endangered delta smelt (a tiny fish) have turned off the tap that brings water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The delta funnels water to about 25 million California residents, most in the southern part of the state. Some of this water had been used for aquifer replenishment, too.

Several cities – notably Los Angeles – have announced mandatory water restrictions and the imposition of conservation fees for excess water use. Lakewood is currently in the first, voluntary stage of the city's water conservation ordinance.

Lakewood's voluntary conservation is working. Com-

pared to April 2008, residents used 10 percent less water in April 2009.

Resolve to become conscious of the amount of water you use, and look for ways to use less whenever you can. The most important thing to do: Think as you use water!

**What more can you do?**

The planting of drought-resistant landscaping and the use of low-water-use appliances offers the best chance of preserving water supplies that will grow less plentiful as the region's population expands and climate change brings even longer dry spells.

But conservation steps you can take today require almost nothing but a little common sense:

1. Your lawn may be your biggest water user. Typically, more than 50 percent of the water consumed

2. If a faucet drips at a rate of just one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons of water per year. Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints. **Saves 20 gallons per day for every leak stopped.** As an extra saving step, retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors to slow the flow of water. **Saves 500-800 gallons per month.**

3. More than 10 percent of all water used in the home is used in the washing machine. An automatic clothes washer, at full cycle and highest water level, uses 30 to 50 gallons of water. (Make every load count!) The dishwasher requires up to 25 gallons for a full cycle. Run only full loads. Set the water level for the size of

## IS YOUR HOME WATER TIGHT?

4. A low-flow showerhead will save 50 gallons of water during a 10-minute shower. Most models have a shut off valve that will save even more water by stopping the water while you lather up. **Saves up to 700 gallons per month.** And take shorter showers!

5. Under Lakewood's conservation standards, water use for hardscape cleaning is strictly limited. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks. Adjust your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden and not on the sidewalk or street. Deep soak gardens once weekly rather than sprinkle lightly several times a week. **Saves up to 600 gallons a month.** ■

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Summer is not the best season to consider a new landscape scheme. Your established plants are probably already adapted to low water conditions. They won't require as much water as an entirely new landscape plan. This summer, minimize water use with established plant materials, wean your lawn from too much water use, and consider installing more efficient automatic irrigation systems.

### Be a water-wise gardener

You can make changes in the layout of your garden that maximizes the value of irrigation. For example, porous paving materials such as brick, decomposed granite, or gravel used in patios and walkways help keep water in the garden rather than in the gutter.

In flower beds, till the soil with compost to improve its water holding capacity and then put down a layer of mulch two to three inches deep. A mix of lawn clippings and leaves is an economical mulch. (Keep mulch away from the base of trunks to allow plants to breathe.) A landscape fabric can be installed under the mulch layer to minimize weed growth and

retain moisture.

You can also condition your lawn to use less water. Increase the height of the lawn mowing cut to expand the root system. Keep mower blades sharpened. Rake out the thatch.

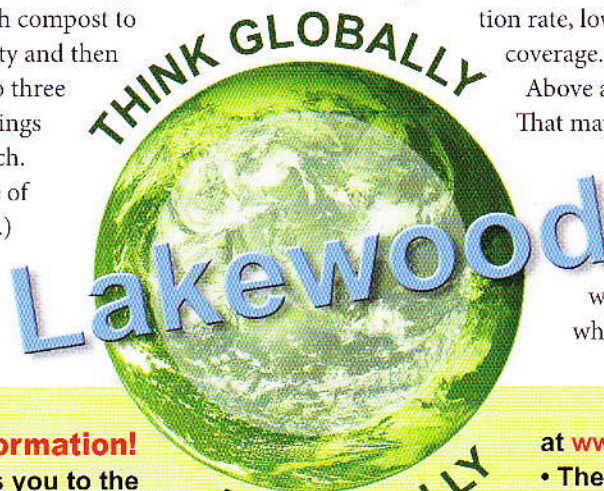
Replace old sprinkler heads with matched precipita-

tion rate, low gallonage heads that provide uniform spray coverage.

Above all, stop watering whenever runoff occurs! That may mean turning the water on and off in cycles to allow moisture to soak into the ground, but it beats watching the water flow down the street. If you are watering a few potted plants, put down the hose and pick up a watering can. You'll use less water and it will go where you put it. ☐

If you do nothing else this summer to save water, at least do these 5 things:

1. Reset sprinkler timers to water before 7:00 a.m.
2. Wash only full loads.
3. Fix leaks in faucets, toilet, and hose bibs.
4. Use a broom, not a hose.
5. Install flow restrictors on showers and faucets.



### More conservation information!

Lakewood Online connects you to the whole world of water conservation inside and outside your home at [www.lakewoodcity.org/water](http://www.lakewoodcity.org/water). Some of the best sites: Shut Your Tap! provides valuable information on ways to use water more efficiently at [www.centralbasin.org/shutyourtap.html](http://www.centralbasin.org/shutyourtap.html). • The Central Basin Municipal Water District offers more helpful tips and information on other conservation programs at [www.centralbasin.org/conservation.html](http://www.centralbasin.org/conservation.html). • The Watering Calculator estimates the right amount of water to give your lawn and garden every week. Plug in your ZIP code

at [www.bewaterwise.com/calculator.html](http://www.bewaterwise.com/calculator.html). • The California Urban Water Conservation Council has put together a virtual home that demonstrates the many ways you can help conserve water. Take an interactive tour at [www.h2house.org/tour/index.cfm](http://www.h2house.org/tour/index.cfm). • WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, identifies products that use less water. For more information, go to [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense). • The Natural Resources Conservation Service has simple ways of conserving water in your own backyard. The tips are at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/watercon.htm](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/watercon.htm).